



KANSAS

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ADRIAN J. POLANSKY, SECRETARY

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

May 22, 2006

Docket Clerk
Fruit and Vegetable Programs
AMS - USDA
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Stop 0243
Washington, D.C. 20250-0243

Re: Docket No. FV06-1290-1 PR

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to underscore my support for the written comments submitted by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture on the proposed rules regarding the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

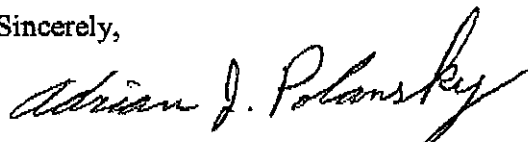
In particular, I would ask that USDA notify the individual states of the exact amount of the block grant they will receive prior to preparing a state plan for use of the money. We must have a budget before we can plan the state's specialty crop campaign.

I also believe it is vital for USDA to reexamine Section 1290.1, which makes it appear that funds cannot be used for purposes of advertising, public relations, selling and marketing. That is not acceptable. One of the things that made the 2001 program so successful was the flexibility to use funds to their best advantage in a state. Half the past grants were used for marketing purposes. State departments of agriculture must be allowed to market and promote specialty crops.

And finally, I ask USDA to consider a simplified approach to providing reports and conducting audits. Flexibility on the part of USDA/AMS will allow efficient and effective programs to enhance the competitiveness of each state's unique specialty crops.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Adrian J. Polansky
Secretary of Agriculture